

Decision 02-09-008 September 5, 2002

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of BLUE & GOLD FLEET, L.P., a limited partnership, to increase fare levels for the transportation of passengers in vessel common carrier service between Tiburon, on the one hand, and authorized points in San Francisco, on the other hand.

Application 02-06-015
(Filed June 10, 2002)

OPINION GRANTING RATE INCREASE

Summary

Blue & Gold Fleet, L.P. is granted a fare increase for its vessel common carrier service between Tiburon and authorized points in San Francisco.

Facts

Blue & Gold Fleet, L.P. (Applicant) operates a passenger common carrier vessel service between Tiburon on the one hand and authorized points in San Francisco on the other hand. It seeks an increase in its fares of between \$0.75 and \$1.25 per one-way passenger. The application shows that current operations of this service resulted in a loss of \$456,151 for 2001. There are no operating subsidies provided by federal, state, or local funds for this service. This loss does not include a temporary increase granted by the Commission to offset drastic fuel increases. This increase expired on June 30, 2002. (TL-18989 dated March 6, 2002.)

The fares for this service were last increased in Decision 99-02-024. Applicant projects that even with the requested fares it will sustain an operating deficit of \$456,331 for the service in question. Applicant projects a continued decline in ridership. It attributes this decline to the decline in tourism, the downturn in the economy, and the effects of the “9/11” acts of terrorism.

The application was served on local authorities. There have been no protests.

Notice of this matter appeared in the Commission’s Daily Calendar on June 17, 2002. In Resolution ALJ 176-3090, the Commission preliminarily categorized this application as ratesetting and preliminarily determined that a hearing was not necessary. There is no reason to disturb the preliminary determinations.

This is an uncontested matter in which the decision grants the relief requested in the application. Accordingly, pursuant to Section 311(g)(2) of the Public Utilities Code, the otherwise applicable 30-day period for review and comment of this decision is waived.

Findings of Fact

1. Applicant operates a passenger vessel common carrier between Tiburon and authorized points in San Francisco.
2. A temporary fuel offset allowed by the Commission expired on June 30, 2002.
3. Applicant seeks to increase its base fares by between \$0.75 and \$1.25 for a one-way trip. Even with the proposed fare increase, Applicant will not operate at the break-even point.
4. There are no operating subsidies from federal, state, or local sources for this service.

5. There have been no protests to this application.

Conclusions of Law

1. The proposed fare increase is just and reasonable and should be granted.
2. Since Applicant is now operating at a loss, and will continue to so operate even under the proposed fares, this order should become effective immediately.
3. Applicant should be authorized to publish the new fares and make them effective on less than 30 days' notice as permitted by Public Utilities Code Section 491.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The fare increase proposed in this application is granted.
2. To implement the increases authorized in this order Applicant shall, on or after the effective date of this order, file revised tariff sheets in accordance with General Order 117. The revised sheets and the fares listed in them shall be made effective no earlier than five days after the date of filing.
3. Applicant shall inform the public of the increased fares and their effective date by posting notice on its passenger vessels. Such notice shall be posted not later than the date the new fares take effect and shall remain posted for not less than 30 days.
4. This proceeding is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated September 5, 2002, at San Francisco, California.

LORETTA M. LYNCH

President

CARL W. WOOD

GEOFFREY F. BROWN

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY

Commissioners

Commissioner Henry M. Duque, being necessarily absent, did not participate.